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ABSTRACT

This filmography lists information on 41 films or videotapes related to Shakespeare in cinema to help teachers integrate cinematic texts, or series of texts, into the teaching of Shakespeare's plays. It lists titles, length, and the name of the producer or distributor and includes brief descriptions of the content of the film or videotape. The filmography includes biographical programs, material on Shakespeare's world, condensed versions, critical approaches, avant-garde adaptations, and companion films to 11 of Shakespeare's plays. It also lists contact information for 4 video distributors, and 2 journals and 4 books dealing with teaching Shakespeare. It concludes with sample study guide questions for the film "Forbidden Planet," a companion film to "The Tempest." (RS)

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# SHAKESPEARE IN CINEMA

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ED 439 443

## Choosing A Film

Most teachers of Shakespeare aren't always aware of the options they have to integrate a cinematic texts or a series of texts into their teaching of a Shakespeare play. With the availability of affordable videotapes and DVDs English departments can easily build a library of Shakespeare on film. Here are some suggestions!

## Biographical Programs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| William Shakespeare: A Life in Drama | 50 min. | A&E Biography series |
| William Shakespeare: A Concise Biography | 30 min. | Famous Author series<br>Kultur Video |

Both of these videos provide useful information about Shakespeare's life and times. Your choice would be based on the length of your class period.

## Shakespeare's World

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| Teaching Shakespeare: New Approaches from the Folger Shakespeare Library | 5 min. (excerpt) | Vineyard Video |

This video is a great inservice resource for teachers, but it also provides a great excerpt that summarizes the role of theater in Elizabethan England.

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| Shakespeare in the Classroom | 45 min. | Miramax |

Miramax distributed this tape in the fall to schools across the nation, so you should have a copy lurking back at your school. It features the stars of Shakespeare in Love presents material on the times, Shakespeare life, the language of the sonnets and plays as well as liberal (and well chosen clips) from the film. It is best used as an introduction to R & J.

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| Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Restored | 30 min. | TMW Media Group |

This documentary follows a group of college students from California as they mount a performance of Much Ado About Nothing at London's Globe Theater. The packaging includes a useful study guide complete with suggestions for essay topics, class demonstrations, and discussion questions.

## Condensed Versions

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| Shakespeare: The Animated Tales<br>Macbeth<br>Romeo and Juliet<br>Hamlet | 30 min. | Random House Video |

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The Tempest
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Twelfth Night

These adaptation were originally produced for HBO by a team of Russian animators and BBC actors. The quality of the animation varies, but the most artistic efforts are on display in Macbeth, Hamlet, and The Tempest. Great to use as a preview for less able readers or a review at the end of a unit. I used the Hamlet tape to get my AP students ready to see a production of the play.

## Critical Approaches

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| Discovering Hamlet | 53 min. | PBS Video |

A review of the tape from the NY Times is included later in packet. Useful in its entirety and in excerpt.

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| Looking for Richard | 112 min. | 20th Century Fox |

In the last few years I have used this documentary before my AP students read the text with great success. It features Al Pacino, Kevin Spacey, Winona Ryder, Alec Baldwin, among others.

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|---|---|---|
| Understanding Shakespeare: The Tragedies | 90 min. | Goldhill Video |
| Romeo and Juliet | | |
| Macbeth | | |
| Othello | | |
| Hamlet | | |

This series features actors performing key scenes with scholars discussing those scenes.

## Avant-Garde Adaptations/Curious Finds

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| Macbeth: The Witches Scenes | 17 min. | Facets Video |

The Piven Theater, along with video artist Miroslaw Rogala, have created a post-apocalyptic interpretation of the witches' scenes. A great catalyst for discussion and comparison to more traditional film adaptations of those scenes.

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| Silent Shakespeare | 88 min. | Milestone Video |

This recent release (see review) features the first cinematic adaptations of King John, King Lear, The Tempest, Richard III among others. Screening one of these versions could prove to be a springboard to having students create condensed, pantomimed versions of the plays that they are reading.

## Companion Films

**Romeo and Juliet**

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| West Side Story | probably we have all used this musical adaptation with R&J at one time or another |

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| Shakespeare in Love (R) | excerpts of the "rehearsal" process for R & J would prove entertaining and informative to help students understand the theater in Shakespeare's time |
| Zebrahead (R) | contemporary adaptation set in an interracial high school |

## Hamlet

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| Royal Deceit | a curious adaptation starring Christian Bale that attempts to tell the story of Hamlet from its Danish origin, brief nudity |
| Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead | Tom Stoppard's film adaptation of his own play that moves Hamlet into the realm of theater of the absurd |
| Last Action Hero | Arnold Schwartzenegger quotes the Bard and the relationship between the "last action hero" and his young fan echo elements and situations in Hamlet |
| Green Eggs and Hamlet | the melancholy Dane fused with Dr. Seuss with obviously comic results |
| Hamlet (2000) | this adaptation by Michael Almereyda retains Shakespeare's language and translates story into a modern corporate setting |

## Macbeth

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| Throne of Blood | Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's classic adaptation that moves the story to the samurai culture |
| Men of Respect (R) | modern adaptation that transfers the story to the world of NYC mafia, treatment of the "witches" is particularly effective and worth excerpting |
| Fury Is A Woman | aka. The Siberian Lady Macbeth, foreign language adaptation that foregrounds the character of Lady M |

## King Lear

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| The Dresser | follows a troupe in England during WWII as they try to mount a touring production of Lear as the actor/manager suffers a nervous breakdown |
| Ran | Kurosawa's blending of Lear and Macbeth in a truly epic adaptation |

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| Broken Lance | an American western adaptation |

**The Tempest**

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| Tempest | Paul Mazursky's transfer of the plot to contemporary NYC and an isolated Greek Island |
| Forbidden Planet | the classic sci-fi adaptation featuring Robby the Robot as the stand-in for Caliban |
| The Tempest (1998 TV adaptation) | recent adaptation set in antebellum South starring Peter Fonda |
| Prospero's Books (NC-17) | inventive adaptation by Peter Greenaway, but its liberal use of nudity makes it difficult to use in a high school classroom |

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

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| Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy | Woody Allen's loose adaptation of mistaken amorous intentions |

**Taming of the Shrew**

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| Ten Things I Hate About You | recent teen comedy that transfers Kate and Petruchio to the Pacific Northwest and the trials of finding a date for your disagreeable sister |
| Moonlighting episode | check your video store for newly released episodes of this comedy series starring Cybil Shepherd and Bruce Willis, one based on Shrew |

**Richard III**

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| The Tower of London | a Hollywood B-movie starring Boris Karloff as chief executioner, gives a "behind of the scenes " look into Richard's reign |
| Richard III (Ian McKellan) | even though this version uses Shakespeare's language, its transfer to a 20th century fascist regime makes it an audacious, rather than faithful, adaptation |

**Henry IV**

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| Chimes At Midnight | Orson Welles reassembles scenes from Henry IV to explore the character of Falstaff |
| My Own Private Idaho (R) | a modern adaptation set among male prostitutes in Seattle and Portland |

### Othello

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| A Double Life | a melodrama starring Ronald Coleman as an actor portraying Othello who discovers life imitates art |
| O | a forthcoming (2000) modern adaptation set in high school among basketball players |

### Love's Labour Lost

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| LLL: The Musical | Kenneth Branagh is at it again in a forthcoming (spring 2000) adaptation that integrates classic songs from the 20's and 30's into the Shakespearean text |

### General Application

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| L.A. Story | Steve Martin's contemporary comedy that draws heavily on Shakespeare for character motivation and hilarious quips |

## Resources

### Video

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| Poor Yorick<br>89a Downie St.<br>Stratford, Ontario Canada N5A 1W8<br>519-272-1999<br>yorick@bardcentral.com | Most comprehensive listing of Shakespeare audio and video sources. |
| Facets Video<br>1517 W. Fullerton Ave.<br>Chicago, Illinois 60614<br>1-800-331-6197<br>www.facets.org<br>sales@facets.org | Great for hard to find videos. |
| Films for the Humanities and Sciences<br>P.O. Box 2053<br>Princeton, NJ 08543-2053<br>www.films.com<br>cutserv@films.com | Good assortment of documentary/informational films, very expensive to rent or own. |
| The Writing Company/Zenger Video<br>division of Social Studies School Service<br>10200 Jefferson Blvd. room 9711<br>P.O. Box 802<br>Culver City, CA 90232-0802<br>(800)944-5432<br>zengermedia.com<br>access@zengermedia.com | Request "Shakespeare" catalog. |

**Journals**

Shakespeare Magazine
www.Shakespeare.com

Quarterly journal for teachers, by teachers.

Cineaste back issues
Cineaste
Box 2242
NYC, NY 10009-8917

Volumes XXIII No 4 & XXIV No.1 both focus on recent Shakespeare films. Cost: $4.00 each.

**Books**

Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television. ed. Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U Press, 1994.

Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies. ed. James E. Davis and Ronald E. Salomone. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1993.

Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century. ed. James E. Davis and Ronald E. Salomone. Ohio U. Press, 1997.

Shakespeare: The Movie. ed. Lynda E. Boose and Richard Burt. NY: Routledge, 1997.

THE TEMPEST: Companion Film
Sample Study Guide Questions

FORBIDDEN PLANET (1956 - 99 min.)
Directed by Fred McLeod Wilcox
Starring: Walter Pigeon, Leslie Nielsen, Anne Francis
Screenplay by Warren Stevens (based on story by Irving Block & Allen Adler)

As you watch the film, consider the following questions which will guide our discussion.

How did Morbius come to the star of Altair-IV?

How does the world of the "Forbidden Planet" resemble Prospero's island? In what ways is it different? What makes this place a "forbidden" world?

Who or what are the Krells? What role have they played in the development of the planet and in Morbius' life on the planet?

Morbius is a philologist? What does he study? Why would this kind of person be involved in space exploration?

How is Morbius similar to Prospero? How are they different?

What replaces the magic and illusion of the play? What does this add to the development of plot and characterization?

What are the qualities of Robby the Robot? How does it compare to Caliban and Ariel?

How does the film incorporate the comic subplot of the play?

How does the film develop the lovers' subplot? How do the characters of Alteira and Adams compare to Miranda and Ferdinand?

Explain how these elements of the film have parallels in the play:
brain boosters
"the monsters of the id"

What themes do the film and play share?

Explain the appropriateness of the ending of the film. How does the ending reflect the way the plot, characters, and themes have been developed up to that point?